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ABSTRACT

Sequenced Peer Teaching/Video-Tape Recording: Playback (SPT/VTR: P) is a short-term, in-service program for the augmentation of instruction. It offers a way for instructors to observe their own instruction and that of their colleagues in a context that provides for maximum attention to teaching. An instructor plays a sequence of videotaped teaching lessons to a small group of colleagues. Playback follows, as does a group critique. The four phases in program development are: planning meetings; first workshop; inter-workshop activities; and second workshop. The basic premises behind SPT/VTR:P are joint planning, peer teaching, group setting, information, sequenced procedure, long range professional benefits, and outside facilitators. (CA)

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INTRODUCING SPT/VTR:P

Sequenced Peer Teaching/Video Tape Recording: Playback

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WHAT IS SPT/VTR:P?

Sequenced Peer Teaching/Video Tape Recording: Playback is a short term, in-service program for the augmentation of instruction. Working with a small group of colleagues and an outside facilitator, the instructor presents a sequence of video taped teaching sessions. Playback follows, with group critique. In this way, two highly useful feedback sources are utilized--the feedback of the video tape, and of the colleague.

SPT/VTR:P offers a productive, constructive means by which instructors can observe their own instruction and that of their colleagues in a context that provides for maximum attention to teaching.

HOW DOES SPT/VTR:P WORK?

Basically, there are four phases in the STP/VTR:P program as follows:

Phase I: Planning Meetings

Phase II: First Workshop

Phases III: Inter-Workshop Activities

Phase IV: Second Workshop

Evaluation is an integral part of the program, so is not set apart as a separate phase. The phases are described in greater detail below.

First Planning Meeting

The first planning meeting is an exploratory meeting. The facilitators present the prospectus to the group of faculty and

administrators who have indicated an interest in the process. Premises, potential outcomes, mechanics, and other aspects are fully discussed.

Following the meeting, the group may choose among three alternatives:

1. Proceed: adopt the program
2. Proceed: adopt the basic program, with modifications
3. Decline the program

If the decision is to proceed, a planning committee will be set up and a date set for the Second Planning Meeting.

Second Planning Meeting

The planning team convenes to make basic decisions. After a recap of the prospectus and further examination, mechanical aspects such as the setting of time and place, how to involve the faculty at large, and arrangements for necessary equipment are planned. The question of evaluating the program can be raised, as can the prospects for an on-going program growing from the sequenced peer teaching cycle.

First Workshop

The first workshop is for one day with a morning and afternoon session, between which, a break of 1 1/2 hours is necessary to provide time for instructors to prepare their VTR segments for the afternoon session.

The sequence of events for the first day is as follows:

<u>Morning Session</u>

Meeting in large group; overview and orientation, assignment for the first segment

Groups form with facilitators; VTR Initial Segment, Introductory exercise, 2-3 minutes

Convene in large group; assignment for VTR Intermediate Segment, "Explication of a Concept with Provision for Feedback," 3-5 minutes

Adjourn for 1 1/2 hours

Afternoon Session

Convene in VTR groups; VTR and playback, discussion on observable aspects of instruction

Convene in large group; discuss possibilities of VTR for classroom taping and stipulate conditions for viewing of tapes; invitation for volunteers to prepare tapes of classroom teaching for group critique during second workshop; assignment, VTR Extended Assignment; 9-10 minutes

Interworkshop Activities

The interval between the Saturday sessions is one or two weeks. Prior arrangements are made to assure availability of VTR equipment and technicians. Instructors tape teaching/learning segments in their classroom. From these, selected tapes are drawn for group critique during the second workshop. Or, tapes are viewed privately, or with invited colleagues. At some time toward the end of the two weeks, the facilitators meet with the participants to discuss the classroom taping, and to view and select tapes volunteered for the second workshop.

Second Workshop

The second workshop is another one day session. The long lunch break of the first workshop is not necessary. The sequence

of events for the second workshop is as follows:

Convene in large group; review

Convene in VTR groups; 9-10 minute VTR and playback of extended segments; discussion of observations, criteria, procedures, problems and issues

Adjourn for lunch

Continue in VTR groups as time necessitates

Convene in large group for viewing of selected classroom VTR's

Conclusion, open discussion: future plans, evaluation, evolution of policy, procedure, models

SPT/VTR:P AND THE OBSERVATION OF INSTRUCTION

Most instructors continually seek to augment and improve their instruction. A productive way to improve instruction is through the analytic feedback of students. Self-analysis and colleague analysis are other productive means. Yet, even the most conscientious and inventive instructor finds it difficult to set up situations where really useful student feedback can be obtained, or where colleagues can undertake a mutual analytic, feedback generating project. Mostly, the shortage of time precludes such projects.

Also, the setting--the everyday classroom--presents a complex of variables that stand in the way of feedback processes. For instance, there is the suspicion prevalent throughout higher education that observation means evaluation and evaluation means judgement in respect

to job tenure. There are also problems of communicating the feedback. If asked to participate in a program of observation, the instructor will raise these questions: what am I to look for? how will I record what I see? how will I report what I saw?

Given the classroom as the setting for observation, there is no easy way of overcoming the obstacles standing in the way of observation and constructive feedback. But, by using peer teaching in a colleague group as the setting for initial observations and the development of feedback processes, SPT/VTR:P shows a way to eliminate, reduce, or work around the more formidable obstacles.

RESULTS OF SPT/VTR:P

SPT/VTR:P offers a way for instructors to get feedback on their instructional characteristics. Mechanically, the video tape playback provides a feedback rich in details and subtleties. Colleagues provide insightful feedback, for instance, on matters of communication (verbal and non-verbal), lucidity of expression, communicability.

Because the teaching episodes are presented in small colleague groups, feedback is handled in a setting that maximizes interaction. If classroom observations are threatening, then SPT/VTR:P greatly reduces the threatening aspect, as teaching sessions are conducted in colleague groups. Experience has shown that feedback obtained in this situation is conducive to the improvement of instruction.

Another positive outcome is the development of a sensitivity to aspects of instruction. Also, solutions can be explored for the problems inherent in devising means of observing, describing, and evaluating instruction. On the basis of these outcomes, progress may be made toward college wide policies, procedures, and practices for the evaluation of instruction, a concern of growing importance throughout higher education.

Still another outcome is the establishment of colleague rapport, across discipline lines. This rapport, forged in the interaction of the peer groups, can become the basis for faculty planned, implemented and evaluated programs for the evaluation of instruction.

SPT/VTR:P introduces many instructors to video tape equipment. For some time, instructors in motor skill areas have used the video tape to good advantage as have instructors in speech and drama. Closed circuit television provides a way of magnifying and amplifying demonstrations. However, the use of the video tape equipment seems formidable to many instructors, and its applications obscure. Becoming familiar with its operation, and participating in its use for feedback and variations in ways of presenting data can encourage instructors in all fields to incorporate the medium into their teaching. Video taping has proven to be a successful method for stimulating student motivation.

SOME BASIC PREMISES BEHIND SPT/VTR:P

Joint Planning: The effectiveness and relevance of the program depends on participant involvement in shared planning. Among potential participants are faculty from all areas, new and experienced, counselors, librarians, administrators, and other members of the college community. Participation should be voluntary.

Peer Teaching: Video tapes are made of participants as they teach participants. This is not "role playing", or simulated teaching. It is peer teaching, which means that the instructor pitches his teaching to the group as it is, in the here and now.

Group Setting: Video taping is done in the setting of a small group. The group becomes a source of insights, probing and perceptive, yet supportive and constructive. Members bring to the group a variety of viewpoints and orientations, which enrich the interaction and provide interdisciplinary contact.

Information: Video tapes, when played back, give the instructor an opportunity to observe aspects of his own teaching otherwise virtually impossible to know. For instance, non-verbal communication, diction and voice, multiple messages, and other elements can be observed. Because the video tape is a way of presenting a repeatable version of reality, discussion following a playback is not hampered by incomplete or inaccurate recollection.

Sequenced Procedure: The taped teaching moves through three phases, cumulative and integrated in nature. The video taping begins with a short, single purpose segment. The next segment calls for specified instructional skills. Next, the instructor prepares an extended demonstration segment incorporating a variety of instructional techniques. This sequenced procedure provides for a gradual introduction to the process, and facilitates the indetification of dimensions of instruction.

Long Range Professional Benefits: SPT/VTR:P will promote long range benefits, which include acceptance of the concept of self and colleague observation with mutual analysis and critique. Also, there may begin an evolution of an in-service program for faculty development, with faculty taking a large role in its planning and direction. The program can initiate work toward a college consensus onpolicy and procedure for the evaluation of instruction. Protocols as to what is observable, how shall observations be reported, and what constitute "standards" may be developed. Benefits for individual faculty members will be in the augmentation of their instruction by developing variety and variability.

Outside Facilitators: The term "facilitator" is carefully chosen to describe the role of the "outside" person or persons working with the participants in the program. Facilitation (the encouragement of process) is his role, not lecturing nor manipulation. The facilitator takes an active role, for he is a member of the group. Being an

"outsider," the facilitator has the special advantage of neutrality. That is, he has no judgemental relationship to the members of the group. His interest is in teaching, instructors, curriculum, students, the group and its processes.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT SPT/VTR:P

Why would a college want to set up a program of sequenced peer teaching? Would it be worth the time and money?

In respect to cost, the program can be justified in terms of increased faculty proficiency. In respect to the time invested by individuals, the program can be justified by increased versatility and variability in instruction. For the college as a whole, a small beginning made in a SPT/VTR:P program can lead to a series of projects in professional development, which can ultimately work for the benefit of the entire college community.